

Report Steps by AAC For Fluoride Control

Step are being taken to correct serious pollution problems in the Columbia Falls area caused by Anaconda Aluminum Co. and local lumber mills.

Benjamin F. Wake, the state's clean air director, commented Friday on pollution problems before a joint meeting of the State Board of Health and Air Pollution Control Advisory Council.

Attending the Helena meeting from the Flathead were Board of Health members, Dr. George Gould, Kalispell, and John Bartlett, Whitefish, and Mel Ruder, Columbia Falls, member of the air pollution control group.

KILLING PINES

Wake said: "In my opinion damage to ponderosa pine" is caused by fluorides from the aluminum plant. He also noted other factors of winter kill and beetle infestation.

Wake commented that the amount of fluorides being released into the atmosphere was considerably more than the 35 parts per million figure slated to become the state's standard.

He was asked: "Is there a time limit for Columbia Falls compliance?" Wake replied, "yes, in 1971." He added that emission standards for fluorides should be on the agenda for the next meeting.

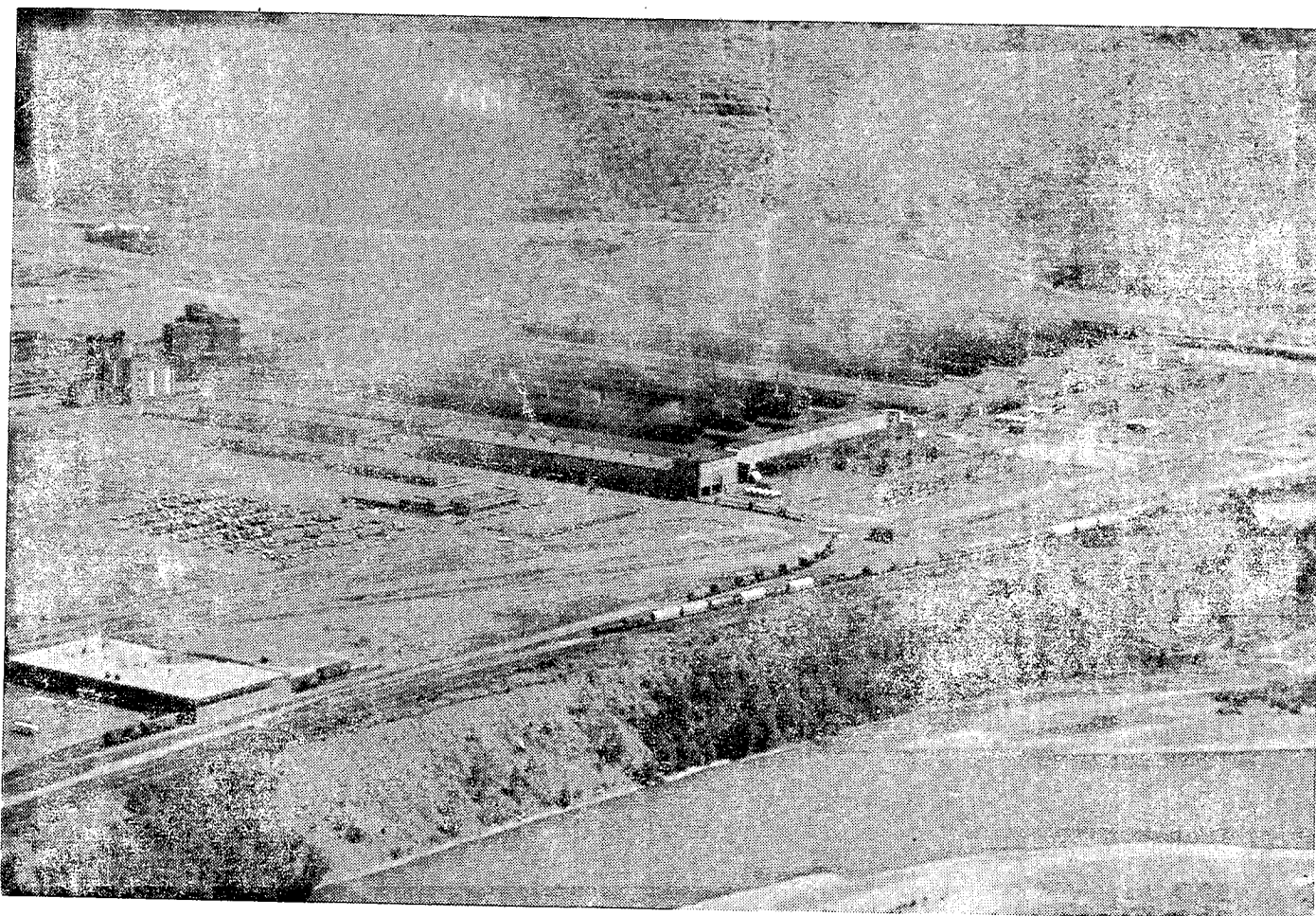
Replying to a question as to damage in Glacier National Park about six airmiles away, Wake said: "More sensitive vegetation in Glacier Park will be affected (by fluorides). There is some deterioration."

Then he stressed the magnitude of the Anaconda Aluminum Co. problem "a thousand times more difficult than at Garrison" where there has been considerable controversy and improvements.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Referring to Anaconda Aluminum Co., Wake stated: "Something needs to be done. Everyone agrees. Question is how. Every aluminum plant has the problem."

Montana's clean air director then mentioned AAC having vertical stud pots with a more difficult system in which to collect gases. Comment was made of a report that would require an expenditure of \$8 mil-



EXPANDED Anaconda Aluminum Co. plant.

Fluoride Control

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lion to control fluorides at Columbia Falls.

Wake continued: "Things are being tried. Effort is being made."

Frank J. Laird, Butte, an Anaconda Co. engineer and council member, acknowledged that the "aluminum industry has a problem with fluorides and many people are working on it." Efforts are underway to upgrade scrubbers. Seven different engineering groups have been working on it.

OTHER STATES

Wake told of installations in Washington and fluoride emission standards in Oregon. He mentioned a new Washington plant where a \$9 million monitor scrubbing system was used. The hard winter of 1968-69 caused a freeze-up.

Wake said that the Rocky Mountain Phosphate plant at Garrison was continuing improvements. He added grass tests showed lower fluoride content than ever before though there are still some areas near Garrison with excessive fluorides.

The Friday morning session also saw a report on extensive studying underway on East Helena industrial pollution by federal and state agencies.

Presiding at the morning session was Barry Nolan, Billings, chairman of the Air Pollution Control Advisory Council.

MRS. MANN PRESIDES

Mrs. Virginia Mann, Missoula, chairman of the State Board of Health, presided at the afternoon meeting which saw 2½ hours of discussion mainly on sulphur dioxide emission standards.

Refineries and smelters — not aluminum and the woods industry — have sulphur dioxide problems.

The State Board of Health has called a public hearing Nov. 21 on proposal to establish maximum allowable sulphur dioxide ground-level concentrations. This involves release of what becomes sulphuric acid in the atmosphere.

Montana's proposed maximum allowable sulphur dioxide ground-level concentrations call for 1.5 parts per million for five minutes not more than once in each hour or .1 parts per million in unlimited occurrence.